

## **Eastern Washington University SWOT Analysis**

On August 14-15, 2023 John Welty, Senior Associate, AASCU Consulting conducted a SWOT Analysis with fourteen stakeholder groups (see Appendix A for list of groups). Each group was asked to identify the top 5-7 strengths of the university; top 5-7 areas of improvement for the university; top 5-7 opportunities for the university; top 5-7 threats to the university and top 5-7 areas of distinction for the University. In addition, the Alumni Association Board and the Campaign Cabinet were asked to respond to the same questions as the fourteen stakeholder groups at meetings which they held without the consultant present.

Below are the data generated from the SWOT analysis.

### **STRENGTHS**

#### **Executive Leadership Team**

- Eagle pride
- Social mobility / first gen focused/community support
- Staff and faculty commitment to students
- Athletic success
- Legislative love
- Programmatic – Cybersecurity, Blue Ribbon Programs

#### **Directors and Administrators**

- Talented / Passionate Staff and Faculty / Strong Staff Who Care about EWU ID
- External Groups - Boards / Alumni Base that Are Passionate
- Good Value proposition for students
- Not pretentious
- Commitment to student care

#### **Faculty Group 1**

- Students
- Marketability / employment post-graduation
- Dedicated faculty
- Expertise of faculty / teaching expertise
- Accessibility

#### **Academic Deans**

- Focus on regional needs for research and service
- Mixed experience serving a student population
- Coming from low socioeconomics and underrepresented groups
- We have a select cadre of very strong and well-respected faculty and programs of distinction

### **Faculty Senate Leadership**

- Service to first gen students
- Faculty / our lecturers/senior lecturers often carry own programs
- Student diversity
- Very affordable, high-quality programs
- Love our role in our region and community

### **Community Diversity Leadership**

- Diverse commitment / community
- Affordability
- Diverse programs
- Accessible locations

### **Community Townhall/Forum**

- Affordability
- Productive engineering program / growth of STEM
- Accessibility / location - away from big city challenges
- Broad array of degrees
- School pride

### **Staff Group**

- Low tuition
- Student support (SASS) / all services
- ROI / low debt
- Regionally serving
- Staff - available/ approachable
- First gen staff serving first gen students
- Employee benefits

### **Athletics Staff**

- Location
- Branding
- Athletic programs
- STEM and Education departments
- New leadership - new ideas, people w/ broad campus knowledge; community invests in university

### **Student Leaders**

- Affordability
- Small class sizes
- Large number of academic majors
- Student resources
- Leadership opportunities

### **Internal Diversity Leadership**

- Accessibility
- First generation students
- Great staff / faculty
- Research opportunities
- Room to grow

### **Department Chairs**

- First gen students served by EWU
  - Committed to supporting first generation students
- Location within a small rural community (\*Primarily Cheney)
  - High level of safety
  - Parents are comfortable sending their kids here
- Low cost of regional university
  - However, can be a weakness when money is tight
- Good quality and dedicated faculty
- Experiential learning opportunities / hands on student research

### **Faculty Group 2**

- Small class size
- Student population
- Innovative faculty (especially Jr. faculty)
- Innovative projects
- Teaching is valued by peers and students

### **Union Leadership**

- Great physical facilities
- Strong faculty and student engagement / interaction
- Employees are interested in the future of EWU
- Dedicated staff
- Most economic tuition
- Regional access
- Relationship with community colleges
- New nursing program / regional demand

### **Alumni Association Board**

- Relevant Academic Programs, especially Cyber Security/Engineering/Nursing
- Inclusive/diverse community
- Athletics
- Sense of Community
- Affordable

### **Campaign Cabinet**

- Sense of community among students
- Lovely campus
- Community pride /loyalty
- First Gen/underserved students

### **AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT**

#### **Executive Leadership Team**

- Buy into EWU
- Morale
- Accountability/assessment/data - informed decision making
- Financial forecasting
- Budget development
- DEI infrastructure
- Organization development/talent development

#### **Directors and Administrators**

- Student retention
- Semester/quarter/online academic calendars / make a decision as to which one, not offer both
- Campus experience for students
- Senior leadership
- Focus/prioritization

#### **Faculty Group 1**

- Catalyst building – lack of utility as classroom/overburdening processes
- Doing SRA 2 years after PRD
- Reorganization - put folks in positions of leadership without support or mentoring
- Too much funding in athletics and not enough in academics
- Faculty and staff burnout
- Retain/replace/recruit staff and faculty

#### **Academic Deans**

- We are very risk averse
- Right sizing the regional public university
- Morale

#### **Faculty Senate Leadership**

- Need more effective/invested leadership
- Need more diverse Board of Trustee members
- Administration reluctant to spend money to make money and need institutional incentive structure that benefits the university
  - Recognition for student advising

- Merit pay for grant work
- Workload for add on service (accreditation, strategic plan, etc.)
- Relationship between campus and community groups could be improved
- DEI/Social Justice - no institutional, long term offers to change environment; “check the box” mentality with no vision
- Retention of faculty and staff of color

### **Community Diversity Leadership**

- Activism to support community
- Connect with youth in schools
- Build programs to support / drive local youth to EWU
- Establish DEI training during student orientation
- Improve the internal culture
- Improve community exposure
- Improve the value alignment around diversity
- Improve the support for students from diverse populations

### **Community Forum**

- Staffing and class offerings
- Increased focus on student centric thinking
  - Remove obstacles to enrollment/graduation
  - Genuinely engaged and dedicated president
- Spokane strategy / develop / students / alumni / businesses
- Indecisiveness - we change strategy every two years

### **Staff Group**

- Staff retention / employee burnout and retention
- Living by the value(s)
- Cooperation vs competition
- Resources
- Too many priorities

### **Athletics**

- Facilities out dated
- Campus housing
- Financial management processes
- Business practices / processes
- Training table
- Retention
- Alumni disconnect
- Hiring process
- Onboarding
- Professional development - staff / salaries

### **Student Leaders**

- Lack of agreement on major requirements
- Inconsistent admission requirements for programs/poor advising
- Students of color treated differently by faculty
- No response to discrimination complaints / lack of support for students of color
- Inconsistent caring and performance of faculty

### **Internal Diversity Leadership**

- Facilities
- Housing
- Recruitment/retention/staff, faculty, students
- DEI (Staff/faculty and students)
- Morale (especially staff and faculty)
- Support staff

### **Department Chairs**

- Help for lecturers/senior lecturers / professional development support + opportunities / staff positions - not enough funding to hire more faculty
- Marketing and branding at the micro level
- Transparency, cost/budget/leadership
- Stable leadership
- One system
- Improve campus experience / ownership of buildings downtown

### **Faculty Group 2**

- Improving the internal communication, marketing and advertising / consistency between department websites
- More transparency and connection between Spokane campus and main Cheney campus such as quarter semester scheduling, recruiting employees, training, faculty, training, mentoring / onboarding, faculty workload, etc.
- Better advising - confusing process and needs more training / student support
  - Communication with CAAR and department schools
  - Value faculty advising
- Stability
  - Administrative / leadership
  - Permanent to interim
  - Retention of faculty and staff
- Reward exceptional service
  - From bottom up

### **Union Leadership**

- Infrastructure problems
- University doesn't support mental / physical health of employees
- Employee turnover burnout

- Desperate need to right size athletics
- Stop cuts to DEI/Affinity groups as these are major areas to recruit students
- Management stability
- Inadequate student recruitment

### **Alumni Association Board**

- Enrollment/student recruitment
- Fund raising
- Clarity of Goals/direction
- Invest in high enrollment programs/disinvest in low enrollment programs
- Buildings/infrastructure
- Community Partnerships/engagement

### **Campaign Cabinet**

- Focus and alignment
- Target high impact programs with resources
- More Advancement staff focusing on major gifts, principal gifts, and planned gifts
- Marketing University and its successes

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

**Note: One group did not respond due to time constraints**

#### **Executive Leadership Team**

- Private partnerships / tribal communities
- Fundraising
- Streamlined curriculum/flexible education
- Student support
- Grants (hiring research faculty)

#### **Directors and Administrators**

- Dual credit / CIHS / R/S / PCE
- Capitalize on value proposition
- Define ourselves
- Regional partnerships that increase applied learning
- Residence hall improvements
- Invest strategically in what you want to change/improve/grow

#### **Faculty Group 1**

- DEI
- Fundraising
- Promote wellness / opportunity to improve morale
- Online programs
- Community engagement / EWU in the high school/ not much K-5 presence / running start

### **Academic Deans**

- The booming economy in the Spokane region + relocation of Seattleites and Californians
- Industry connections
- Move to semesters
- AI

### **Faculty Senate Leadership**

- Social mobility for our students
- Leverage state legislature for greater financial aid
- New leadership hopefully focused on quality education
- Focus on our own identity - who are we?
- Culturally diverse population with active communities

### **Community Diversity Leadership**

- Decrease harm in the community
- They (city) are not a lab
- Improve quality of life for all students, faculty, staff, etc.
- Decolonize / diversify
- HBCU partnerships

### **Community Forum**

- Double down on momentum from cyber program - more tech
- Enhance partnerships with other universities
- Graphic design is a strategic opportunity for growth
- Better ties between Spokane and Cheney programs / campuses
- Get off campus and connect to businesses

### **Staff Group**

- New hires / ideas
- Faculty and staff engagement
- Professionalism and continuing education
- Enhance our collaboration and unity
- Community collaboration

### **Athletics Staff**

- Enrollment increase and growth / summer camps
- Location, growing area and whole region
- New leadership
- Strong alumni base in area
- Athletic branding

### **Student Leaders**

- Become HSI
- Improve leadership stability and faculty



- Improve university identity
- Programs well organized / running smoothly

### **Internal Diversity Leadership**

- 21st century education for a 21<sup>st</sup> century educated student
- Bringing innovation forward
- Change of pedagogical framework - students are different now
- Curriculum - with follow through
- Embarking on student population (traditional and non-traditional)
- Diversity leadership – authentic/ visionary
- DEI Training and policy intention
- Wheelchair access and parking expansion

### **Department Chairs**

- Spokane presence in the “medical” triangle
- Serving the underserved population and region
- Affordability
- Alumni connections/supports
- Collaborations and cross participations
  - Community / engagement support office (bring back)

### **Faculty Group 2**

- Great faculty
  - Teaching
  - Especially underprepared students
- Health and behavioral health
  - Opportunities for interprofessional clinical education and practice - especially in research medical hub in Spokane near by
- Spokane - creative economy
- Strong respectful relationships among faculty to build interdisciplinary programs
- Need more self-promotion- we do a lot of great stuff but have a low community profile
- Building Cheney - revitalize
  - Building relationships with local businesses and professional community
  - Outreach for education with local community (high schools, etc.)
- Support of faculty from administration
  - Example: researching technology -> IT Declarations
- Online/ hybrid education
- Continuing education opportunities
- Recruiting throughout the state

### **Union Leadership**

- Pushing high ROI degrees for students
- All quarter or semester, NOT both
- Support and attract (and retain) first generation students

- Replacing retired/fired faculty and staff
  - Courses for upper development
  - Availability in summer
- Use regional economic data to drive program array

### **Alumni Association Board**

- Expand Academic programs (Nursing, Technology, Engineering, Cyber Security)
- Enrollment Growth
- Athletic Sponsorships/partnerships
- Publicize value of higher education

### **Campaign Cabinet**

- Consolidate academic programs
- Emphasis on STEM/Cyber Security/Health Science programs (Polytechnic University)
- Engagement with region

## **THREATS**

### **Executive Leadership Team**

- No stable coordination in post-secondary education
- Multiple Priorities
- Declining enrollment
- Devaluing higher education
- Expense versus investment mindset
- Imposter syndrome/morale

### **Directors and Administrators**

- Competition - community colleges
- Demographics
- Lack of trust/transparency/morale
- Leadership instability/Lack of focus/Clear institutional direction
- Value of higher education
- Too many academic programs (will add but not delete); (resistance to change)

### **Faculty Group 1**

- BOT is disconnected from our mission
- Budget
- Faculty and admin. not on same page/ all stakeholders' interests aren't in alignment
- High workload across faculty, staff and admin.
- Low retention (faculty and staff ratio to students)

### **Academic Deans**

- Very low staffing levels
- Three academic calendars

- Climate change
- Demographic cliff
- Student(s) focus/lack there of
- Reputational challenge

### **Faculty Senate Leadership**

- Underfunding / defunding of higher education
- Anti-higher ed political climate - especially local and nationwide
- Athletic funding/increasing costs
- Ambitious and temporarily leaders – Short-term thinking mindset
- Faculty attrition and failure to replace tenure lines with other tenure lines

### **Community Diversity Leadership**

- Disconnected / isolated
- Racism / lack of diversity
- Drugs., alcohol, depression, anxiety
- Lack of diverse faculty / and losing those that are there because of the environment
  - Better salaries
  - Better benefits
  - Racism
  - Environment of surrounding city

### **Community Forum**

- Enrollment
- Entrenchment - including administration
- Athletics
- Uncertainty
- No Spokane strategy
  - Funding, alumni, business, internships, investment

### **Staff Group**

- Faculty/staff turnover \*especially POC\* / burnout
- Aging infrastructure
- budget/resources/bandwidth
- Student needs-housing and food insecurity
- Value of higher education and degree

### **Athletics Staff**

- Enrollment
- Competitive salaries /turnovers all around
- Aging infrastructure
- University fiscal process / cost to do business (Unions)
- Missing opportunities for recruitment

### **Student Leaders**

- Money
- Retention of students of color
- Off campus / online students not paying certain fees
- Burnout (student and staff)
- Lack of safety and/or real support
- Market diversity/ it's not true

### **Internal Diversity Leadership**

- Political polarization
- Financial support
  - Transparency
- Unclear priorities / too many agendas that are in conflict
- Disconnected students/lack of support
- Lack of trust

### **Department Chairs**

- Competition from other universities
- National enrollment trends / Demographics of future students
- Ability to recruit and retain strong faculty
- Inability of students to take semester or quarter classes (calendar) / double calendar
- Fear of change / lack of nimbleness

### **Faculty Group 2**

- Athletics - Football in particular
- Enrollment decline
  - Outside competition - our response/lack there of
- Overlapping programs
  - Competing against each other (\*Online vs in-person)
- Lack of structure and incentive for interdisciplinary collaboration
  - Fear of change
- Problematic chairs and directors / lack if stability in leadership
  - Mutual erosion of trust between senior faculty and upper administration
- Lack of commitment to raise retention
- Lack of identity
- Increase the number of programs at local institutions
- Infighting

### **Union Leadership**

- Low enrollment
- Competition
- Perceived value of degree
- High turnover - loss of institutional knowledge
- Regional economy

- Pandemic hangover
- Catalyst - we built it and they didn't come

### **Alumni Association Board**

- Rising cost of living/tuition
- Devaluing of higher education
- Declining enrollment
- Funding changes
- Political polarization

### **AREAS OF DISTINCTION**

**Note: Three groups were unable to respond due to time constraints**

#### **Executive Leadership Team**

- Red turf
- Accessible/best value in WA
- First generation concentration
- STEM focused
- Large education alumni base

#### **Directors and Administrators**

- Highest number of Pell eligible grant students and lots of upward mobility potential
- First generation serving
- Community loves us and wants to partner with us
- Lowest tuition cost
- Stronger brand identity/red turf

#### **Faculty Group 1**

- Student population (first gen, non-traditional, parents, working students, etc.)
- Almost HSI
- Near Spokane but also lots of rural schools
- We provide opportunities for students who might not find them elsewhere
- Low pay for faculty and staff / pay discrepancies / adjunct faculty

#### **Academic Deans**

- Institute for Public Policy and Data Analytics
- Have established a strong reputation for workforce preparation
- The Arts

#### **Faculty Senate Leadership**

- Strong professional programs
- Active faculty (within community research) / dedicated faculty - strong programs
- Alumni - especially ones that are experienced and are able to achieve their goals because of their transformative experiences at the university

- Community relationships - communities and community-based education
- Libraries

### **Community Diversity Leadership**

- A commuter-school-inviting to students
- Faculty involvement in the community
- Campus upgrades
- Addressing / removing barriers to historically difficult programs (nursing)

### **Community Townhall/Forum**

- Red football turf
- Focus on first gen students
- Focus on regional business communities
- Only university to have all 4 health professions
- Cyber security

### **Staff Group**

- Cybersecurity / nursing
- Affordability / Scholarships and Aid
- Athletics / red turf
- Location
- First gen serving
- Prairie restoration

### **Athletics**

- High percentage of first gen college students and student diversity
- Accessible
- Low tuition cost
- Unique niche, unexpected
- Small community with big city close by

### **Student Leaders**

- Affordability
- Location
- Diversity week
- Job opportunities
- Unique leadership opportunities

### **Internal Diversity Leadership**

- Biology
- American Indian Studies (first program in country)
- Use of Indigenous language in education
- Affordability
- Reading program (social work, online learning, communication studies, entrepreneurship)

- Urban planning majors, important to cities and rural areas
- IEP for International students
- CAMP program

### **Department Chairs**

- High concentration of Eagles in metro area
- DPT / and multiple of Health Sciences programs
- High connection to first generation
- Computer disciplines
- Affordability / accessibility / accessible faculty

### **Alumni Association Board**

- Academic programs offered (Cyber Security, Engineering, STEM)
- Tight knit community
- Eagle Pride/spirit
- Athletics/Big Sky Champs